

General Minister and President offers pastoral word in response to COVID19 pandemic

March 13, 2020

“Hello Disciples, this is your [General Minister and President](#) Terri Hord Owens.

[Psalm 46](#) tells us that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change and the mountains even crumble into the sea. There is a lot going on in our world today that causes us fear – rumors of wars, economic instability, clashes within our own society, anxiety over election results, and of course the COVID19 coronavirus.

Here at Disciples Center we are working across our [general ministries](#) to ensure that essential tasks are being carried out – but also that our staff are safe, and we’re encouraging as many people to work at home as can. We’ll be sure to keep you posted on any changes to our schedule here at Disciples Center.

After consultation with the moderators of the [General Assembly](#), I have decided to suspend my own travel and public appearances for the time being. One of the most important things that we can all do during this time is to follow the guidance and counsel of state and local authorities, as well as the recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).

Please continue to visit our website, [disciples.org](#), where we have compiled a [list of resources and other valuable information](#) – everything from the most recent guidance from the CDC and the World Health Organization, to helpful suggestions and plans shared from other regions and congregations throughout the Church. I know you will find this [resource](#) helpful.

During these difficult and uncertain times, it’s so important that we stay connected as Church. I encourage you to follow us regularly on our social media outlets: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). In addition, please go to our website, [disciples.org](#), and [sign up](#) for our weekly e-newsletter [Disciples News Service](#). We’ll be communicating with you on a very regular basis through our social media and sending out weekly updates via email. You want to be sure to get the latest news and information from across the Church.

[Week of Compassion](#), the ministry that responds to natural disasters across our Church, will be, in fact, helping us to manage the Church’s response to outbreaks and cases of coronavirus. If you have a case in your congregation or in your region, please [contact Week of Compassion](#), just as you would during any difficult situation, and they are prepared to help coordinate resources to ensure that whatever we can do for churches, families, and congregations, we are in a position to do. Week of Compassion will still be there.

Church, it’s hard to stay faithful during times of difficulty and uncertainty, in times when we’re simply fearful. But our scripture for the General Assembly in 2021, [Romans 8:38-39](#), reminds us of Paul’s own confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul says, ‘I am convinced’ that neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor powers, nor principalities, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

During these times, I hope that you will continue to practice your own spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible study, to remind yourself that God is still with us. We pray for you daily and

we'll continue to pray for you. I am convinced that God will take care of us, that God will lead us through these difficult moments.

Be sure to follow the good advice that's being given to you by health officials, take care of yourselves, be conservative with your own exposure to public events, and know that we are praying for you, that God loves you.

Disciples, I am convinced that nothing in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus. Let's stay connected, and together we'll get through this. God bless you. We'll be praying for you."